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place. That it pays has been incontrovertibly demonstrated, and it is the business men that are now securing from experts plans. All that is needed for fulfillment is co-operation on the part of the planners and the people. Through this agency the dreams which now seem far off, but are in reality of substantial fabric, will come true.

### COMMERCIAL BLIGHT

The spirit of commercialism is dominant in the present age and it has pervaded the field of art as well as the courts of literature. Primarily it stimulates but eventually it blights. Many an artist has been spurred to effort through the necessity of earning a living, and so far no harm is done. Sales are a substantial mark of appreciation and every laborer is entitled to his hire. Even competition in itself is not evil—quickening endeavor and lending the zest of excitement. So long as the artist loves his work more than gold and gives his best all is well. These are normal conditions. But the tendency today is to overestimate the value of those things which money can buy, to look upon luxuries as necessities. The price of living has increased and life itself has become more complicated. In New York exorbitant prices are charged for studios because of the enormous value of land, so that an artist is under the necessity of selling his pictures, if not painting pictures to sell, to avoid being plunged into debt. And to do this he must keep pace with his neighbors, must entertain and be entertained. This produces an abnormal condition of living which cannot, it would seem, be conducive to the production of art. In architecture, also, the effect is felt, and in perhaps even greater degree, the architect's dealings being chiefly with business men on a commercial basis. To ward off the insidious influence, the architects themselves have framed a code of ethics, more honored, however, it would sometimes seem, in the breach than the observance. According to this code it is unprofessional for an architect to advertise or to solicit commissions, and yet

there are so many ways of accomplishing these ends that it would perhaps be hard to distinguish between the innocent and the guilty. But there are bigger crimes which a commercialized standard countenances—a matter of profits, of commissions, of unearned rewards. And the pity of it is that the punishment will not accrue merely to the guilty. It is not solely a question of morals but of expediency; for though at the present time no harm may seem to accrue, we can be assured that art will not continue to flower in such an atmosphere—that the touch of commercialism withers if it does not kill.

### FREE ART.

The old battle cry of those warring against the tariff on art has not been heard for some time now—long enough perhaps to have lost its special significance. If so, all the better; for, after all, it has a bigger meaning. Now that the tariff has been removed, or largely so, is art free? Has it become the common property of the common people? In a measure, yes, through the museums and the generosity of the collectors, but not in an altogether democratic sense. The tariff did not have much to do with that. As Hanna Astrup Larsen has said in an article entitled "The Beauty Hunger of the Poor," in a recent issue of *Harper's Weekly*, "the older people of the immigrant class have lost whatever their native villages might hold of picturesqueness, while they do not know how to make use of what America offers them. Too ignorant of "free days" and timid of marble steps they do not often find their way into the art galleries where pictures and statues might speak to them in the universal language of beauty. Yet even in very wretched homes the ineradicable thirst for something that should bear a message of loveliness will pierce through the filth and squalor." Many of these people, it is true, are now being reached through the schools, but they can all be reached through the municipalities. A little more beauty can be brought architecturally into the homes, and a good deal more into the streets. It is worth while doing things occasionally merely for the

sake of beauty, and yet this is something that is little understood. As a rule we have to have an excuse for securing a piece of sculpture—it must be a monument or a memorial. There must be an excuse for a park, financial or humanitarian. Tenement improvement is classed generally with philanthropy. A rebuke to this is given by Miss Larsen in the words of an old German who was asked if he would not find it more profitable to raise cabbages than roses. "Cabbages!" he exclaimed, "Man lifs not by bread alone—nor by cabbages. Ve must also something for the eyes have—and for the soul."

## NOTES

**THE AMUSEMENT SITUATION IN BOSTON** The Drama Committee of the Twentieth Century Club of Boston recently made a study of the theaters and moving picture shows of that city for a period of ten weeks, the report of which has now been published in pamphlet form. This study was undertaken with the purpose of discovering what sort of entertainment is presented the citizens of an American city in the midwinter season, and to prove, or disprove, the criticisms made against the theater and more especially against the moving picture shows. The investigation was apparently thoughtful, searching; and exhaustive, and the facts gathered may well be pondered by those who concern themselves with the public good. Remedies are not suggested, but the case is laid plainly before the public, by whom deductions can be made. The statistics in this ten-week review have been compiled in three tables—the first showing the attractions playing at the eight principal theaters, at the theaters running stock companies, and the Grand Opera House; the second set of two tables giving statistics in regard to theaters and moving picture shows other than those holding theatrical license; and the third giving a general summary roughly classifying plays and attendance. Several points of special significance set forth in these tables are well commented upon in the

text. For example, it is said, "The overwhelming preponderance of cheaper and less desirable form of entertainment is to be noted. Yet these theaters evidently appeal more and more strongly to their habitués. The great growth of new houses of this type indicates not only a rapidly increasing following but also a tremendous and growing tendency toward a lower and less desirable form of recreative amusement. This tendency is to be seriously condemned. It is also to be regarded with something of alarm, since a constant attendance upon such forms of entertainment—if long persisted in—can not but make the spectator less able to enjoy genuine dramatic art, or any other serious and profitable amusement. The fact, also, that a large proportion of the entertainments in even the first-class theaters is of a strikingly vulgar character, approaching burlesque or vaudeville (as are most of the so-called musical comedies of the day), indicates that the theater, potentially a tremendous educative force, has, under present conditions, so degenerated that it is actively exercising an equally tremendous and widespread influence in lowering public standards of morality and decreasing the average of efficiency of the individual citizen."

This report, furthermore, calls special attention to the moving picture shows, which in Boston already have a seating capacity of over four hundred thousand persons weekly, noting the unsanitary and unsafe buildings wherein they are now set forth, as well as the inadequacy of police regulation for both moral and physical safety. Lastly, the question of censorship is taken up, together with the present state of dramatic criticism, which, in the daily press, seems to be fast bound by commercial interests—the advertiser rather than the public being given first consideration. The charge brought against the Boston papers has aroused considerable comment and not a little resentment, but it is a well-known fact, whether it be true in Boston or not, that the "freedom of the press" has been reduced to an absurdity by dominant commercialism. The situation is, without doubt, grave, but that inquiry is being